

Application Serial No.: 09/462,502
Reply to Office Action dated March 25, 2004

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 5-17, 19, and 20 are presently active in this case, Claims 1, 12-17, and 19 having been amended by way of the present Amendment.

Claim 20 has been allowed.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 12 has been amended to change "the second wall portion" to "a second wall portion." Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 8, 12, 13, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Shiraki (U.S. Patent No. 5,069,477). Claims 1, 3, 5, 8, 12, 13, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hiramitsu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,330,223). Claims 1, 5, 8, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Saito (JP 10-076544). Claims 6, 7, and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over each of Shiraki, Hiramitsu et al., and Saito. For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the art rejections.

The Applicants note that a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claims is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). As will be demonstrated below, the cited references clearly do not meet each and every limitation of independent Claims 1, 12, 13, and 19.

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Amended Claims 1, 12, 13, and 19 of the present application each recite, among other features, a joint portion that constitutes an overlapping portion in which an outer peripheral edge of a cover body overlaps and is provided on an inner side of an opening edge of a main body without a portion of the cover body being provided on an outer side of the opening edge of the main body. (Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification including the figures.) The Applicants submit that the Shiraki, Hiramitsu et al., and Saito reference do not disclose such a configuration.

The Official Action cites, in the Shiraki reference, covering layer (20) for the teaching of the cover body, and insert member (30) for the teaching of the main body. The Official Action points to an edge of an aperture on the insert member (30) for the teaching of the opening of the present invention. The Applicants note that the covering layer (20) is provided on an outer surface of the insert member (30). Thus, the Shiraki reference does not disclose a joint portion that constitutes an overlapping portion in which an outer peripheral edge of a cover body overlaps and is provided on an inner side of an opening edge of a main body *without a portion of the cover body being provided on an outer side of the opening edge of the main body*, as recited in Claims 1, 12, 13, and 19 of the present application.

Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claims 1, 12, 13, and 19 in view of the Shiraki reference.

The Official Action cites, in the Hiramitsu et al. reference, sheath layer (170a) for the teaching of the cover body, and core layer (170b) for the teaching of the main body. The Official Action points to an area inside the core layer (170b) for the teaching of the opening portion of the present invention. The Applicants note that the sheath layer (170a) is provided on an outer surface of the core layer (170b). Thus, the Hiramitsu et al. reference does not

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disclose a joint portion that constitutes an overlapping portion in which an outer peripheral edge of a cover body overlaps and is provided on an inner side of an opening edge of a main body *without a portion of the cover body being provided on an outer side of the opening edge of the main body*, as recited in Claims 1, 12, 13, and 19 of the present application.

Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claims 1, 12, 13, and 19 in view of the Hiramitsu et al. reference.

The Official Action cites, in the Saito reference, element (3) for the teaching of the cover body, and element (2) for the teaching of the main body. The Official Action points to an area below the point at which the element (3) and the element (2) abut for the teaching of the overlapping portion of the present invention. The Applicants note that the element (3) includes a portion that is provided on an outer surface of the element (2). Thus, the Saito reference does not disclose a joint portion that constitutes an overlapping portion in which an outer peripheral edge of a cover body overlaps and is provided on an inner side of an opening edge of a main body *without a portion of the cover body being provided on an outer side of the opening edge of the main body*, as recited in Claims 1 and 13 of the present application.

Accordingly, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claims 1 and 13 in view of the Saito reference.

Claims 3 and 5-11 are considered allowable for the reasons advanced for Claim 1 from which they depend. These claims are further considered allowable as they recite other features of the invention that are neither disclosed, taught, nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of Claim 1.

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Claims 14-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over each of Shiraki, Hiramitsu et al., and Saito in view of Ido (JP 07-061310). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection.

The basic requirements for establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness as set forth in MPEP 2143 include (1) there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings, (2) there must be a reasonable expectation of success, and (3) the reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. The Applicants submit that a *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be established in the present case because the references, either taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations.

Amended Claims 14-17 of the present application recite, among other features, a deformation restricting portion provided along each side of an outer peripheral edge of a cover body or at the periphery of the opening portion, where the deformation restricting portion is adapted to engage with a mold face. (Support for this amendment can be found, for example, at concave groove 22 in Figure 27.) The Applicants submit that none of the Shiraki, Hiramitsu et al., Saito, or Ido references disclose a deformation restricting portion as recited in Claims 14-17.

The Official Action notes that the Shiraki, Hiramitsu et al., and Saito references fail to disclose a deformation restricting portion. The Ido reference is cited for such a teaching.

The Official Action cites element (13a), which is depicted in Figure 1 of the Ido reference, for the teaching of the deformation restricting portion. Figures 1 and 2 of the Ido reference depict element (13a) extend along one side of the cover main body (13). The

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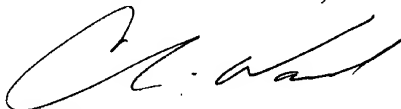
configuration recited in Claims 14-17 is clearly distinguishable from the configuration of element (13a) depicted in the Ido reference. The Ido reference clearly does not disclose a deformation restricting portion *provided along each side of an outer peripheral edge of a cover body or at the periphery of the opening portion.*

Accordingly, since none of the reference, either taken singularly or in combination, teach or suggest a deformation restricting portion provided along each side of an outer peripheral edge of a cover body or at the periphery of the opening portion, and therefore the Applicants request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection.

Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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